

Fall 2014



## Report of the Auditor General of Canada

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### CHAPTER 7

Documentary Heritage of the Government of Canada—  
Library and Archives Canada



Office of the Auditor General of Canada

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OAG

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## **CHAPTER 7**

### **Documentary Heritage of the Government of Canada— Library and Archives Canada**

## Performance audit reports

This report presents the results of a performance audit conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada under the authority of the *Auditor General Act*.

A performance audit is an independent, objective, and systematic assessment of how well government is managing its activities, responsibilities, and resources. Audit topics are selected based on their significance. While the Office may comment on policy implementation in a performance audit, it does not comment on the merits of a policy.

Performance audits are planned, performed, and reported in accordance with professional auditing standards and Office policies. They are conducted by qualified auditors who

- establish audit objectives and criteria for the assessment of performance,
- gather the evidence necessary to assess performance against the criteria,
- report both positive and negative findings,
- conclude against the established audit objectives, and
- make recommendations for improvement when there are significant differences between criteria and assessed performance.

Performance audits contribute to a public service that is ethical and effective and a government that is accountable to Parliament and Canadians.

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Background	1
Focus of the audit	1
<b>Observations and Recommendations</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Acquisition, preservation, and access</b>	<b>2</b>
Library and Archives Canada is not acquiring all the archival records it should from federal institutions	3
Library and Archives Canada has a backlog of 98,000 boxes of archival records	6
<b>Digital readiness</b>	<b>8</b>
Library and Archives Canada does not have a corporate digital strategy	9
Library and Archives Canada did not use its trusted digital repository	11
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>About the Audit</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	
List of recommendations	15



## Introduction

### Background

**Records**—Unpublished documentary material in any medium or form. A government record is under the control of a particular federal institution.

**Archival value**—Historical significance or continued usefulness to Canadian society.

**Federal institution**—Any department or agency of the Government of Canada, or any parent Crown corporation or wholly owned subsidiary of a Crown corporation.

**Business value**—Importance or usefulness in making decisions and producing documentation for ongoing programs, services, and operations; or in fulfilling the requirements of departmental reporting, performance, or accountability.

**Alienation**—Transfer of control of records from the Government of Canada to another institution.

**7.1** Library and Archives Canada serves as the permanent repository of Canada's documentary heritage, which consists of the federal government's publications and **records** of enduring national interest. Library and Archives Canada is responsible for acquiring and preserving records of **archival value** and for making them available to the public. Its collection includes audiovisual records, photographs, artworks, and electronic documents. The *Library and Archives of Canada Act* describes Library and Archives Canada as "the continuing memory of the government of Canada and its institutions."

**7.2** For Library and Archives Canada to acquire government records of archival value, it needs the collaboration of **federal institutions**, which are responsible for transferring records to Library and Archives Canada at the end of the records' retention periods. It also needs the collaboration of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, which monitors the compliance of federal institutions with the Treasury Board's Policy on Information Management.

**7.3** The *Library and Archives of Canada Act* gives Library and Archives Canada the authority to identify records of archival value in federal institutions, and to specify the terms and conditions of their transfer to the care and control of the Librarian and Archivist of Canada. To this end, Library and Archives Canada issues disposition authorities, which provide the terms under which records that have no remaining **business value** at the end of their retention period may be disposed of, through their transfer to Library and Archives Canada, their **alienation**, or their destruction by the institution.

### Focus of the audit

**7.4** The overall objective of the audit was to determine whether Library and Archives Canada has fulfilled its responsibilities for acquiring and preserving government documentary heritage from federal institutions, and for facilitating access to these records for current and future generations. The audit covered the period between the 2009–10 and 2014–15 fiscal years. Audit work for this chapter was completed on 30 April 2014.

7.5 As part of the audit, we consulted five government institutions:

- Employment and Social Development Canada,
- Parks Canada,
- the National Film Board,
- Natural Resources Canada, and
- the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

7.6 In these consultations, the institutions provided information on their collaboration with Library and Archives Canada—specifically, on the identification processes used in the transfer of their records of archival value.

7.7 In carrying out our audit, we examined only the federal government’s documentary heritage. More details about the audit objective, scope, approach, and criteria are in **About the Audit** at the end of this chapter.

## Observations and Recommendations

### Acquisition, preservation, and access

7.8 In 2009, Treasury Board issued the Directive on Recordkeeping, which was designed to support the requirements of recordkeeping by institutions as stated in the Policy on Information Management. The purpose of this directive is to ensure that institutions create, acquire, capture, manage, and protect the integrity of information they use in the delivery of programs and services as well as in support of their internal services.

7.9 This directive supports the *Library and Archives of Canada Act*, which authorizes the Librarian and Archivist of Canada to issue disposition authorities to federal institutions. The disposition authorities specify which records can be disposed of when no longer needed and which records must be transferred to Library and Archives Canada at the end of their retention periods. Each institution must have all records from its program activities covered under disposition authorities (also referred to as “authorities”) to ensure that the government’s documentary heritage is not lost or destroyed and, therefore, is preserved for current and future generations of Canadians.



**7.10** As part of this audit, we examined whether Library and Archives Canada

- had processes for updating its authorities with the federal institutions, and for monitoring their adequacy; and
- was making its collection of the government's archival records known to the public.

**7.11** Overall, we found that Library and Archives Canada was not acquiring all the archival records it should from federal institutions. It does not have up-to-date disposition authorities—that specify which records should be transferred and by what date—for all federal institutions. Of those records it had acquired, Library and Archives Canada had a backlog of some 98,000 boxes of government archival records as of April 2014, and does not know when it will be able to complete the processing of these records and facilitate public access to them. This is important because Canadians do not have knowledge of the government's archival records that have not yet been transferred from the institutions to Library and Archives Canada, nor of records still in Library and Archives Canada's backlog.

**Library and Archives Canada is not acquiring all the archival records it should from federal institutions**

**7.12** We found that the disposition authorities issued by Library and Archives Canada to federal institutions do not adequately cover the government's records. Some are out of date because they do not account for the records of new programs or changes to existing program activities. During the 2009–10 fiscal year, Library and Archives Canada launched a five-year road map for its activities related to government records. A key objective of the road map was to support the successful implementation of the Treasury Board's new Directive on Recordkeeping after its launch in June 2009. The launch of the new recordkeeping directive encouraged Library and Archives Canada to reexamine its ongoing responsibilities that govern how institutions dispose of records that no longer have business value and to identify the disposition authorities that require follow-up with institutions to ensure compliance with the authorities' terms and conditions. Since 2009, Library and Archives Canada has been able to update disposition authorities for only 30 of the 195 institutions that are subject to the *Library and Archives of Canada Act*.

**7.13** This finding is important because without disposition authorities that cover the records for all program activities of federal institutions, Library and Archives Canada cannot ensure that it is acquiring all

the records of archival value that have reached the end of their retention periods. In looking at five institutions to see the status of their disposition authorities, we found that some were holding records because they were not covered by a disposition authority and were therefore waiting to be appraised (Exhibit 7.1).

**7.14** The *Library and Archives of Canada Act* states that no government record may be disposed of or destroyed without the consent of the Librarian and Archivist of Canada, or of a person to whom the Librarian and Archivist has delegated, in writing, the power to give such consent. In addition, the Act requires records of archival value to be transferred to the care and control of Library and Archives Canada. This transfer is accomplished through a disposition authority that specifies, among other things, obligations, transfer requirements, and consequences for non-compliance.

#### **Exhibit 7.1** Some disposition authorities for the five consulted institutions were not all up to date

**Employment and Social Development Canada.** At the time of our audit, Employment and Social Development Canada had 73 disposition authorities listed on the Library and Archives Canada Records Disposition Authorities Control System. Over the years, Employment and Social Development Canada had acquired many programs from consolidations of other institutions, such as Labour Canada and Service Canada. The most recent disposition authority was issued in 2007 to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (the institution's former name), and that disposition authority no longer covers all of Employment and Social Development Canada's program activities. We found that as a result of the numerous programs that were not covered, the Department was storing records, which therefore were not being acquired by Library and Archives Canada. Examples of uncovered programs included defunct social benefits programs and all electronic records related to the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security programs. Employment and Social Development Canada confirmed that Library and Archives Canada has committed to providing coverage with one authority for all areas that currently have gaps by the end of March 2015, and to providing one overarching authority for all programs by March 2016. Meanwhile, Employment and Social Development Canada will not transfer any records until Library and Archives Canada appraises them.

**Parks Canada.** Of the 17 disposition authorities issued to Parks Canada, 9 are in use, but these do not cover all of the institution's programs. The existing disposition authority for records of national parks and historic sites covers the majority of Parks Canada's work and was issued in 1972. The programs created after 1972 are not covered by that disposition authority, so all records related to those programs must be kept by the institution until they are appraised by Library and Archives Canada. Examples of programs with no coverage include those for national marine conservation areas and species at risk. Without updated disposition authorities to allow records to be kept under the care and control of Library and Archives Canada, Parks Canada must retain all records generated by those programs. In 2010, a flood at Mount Revelstoke National Park caused approximately 340 boxes of records to be damaged. After the flood, Library and Archives Canada assessed the contents of the boxes and determined that they were not of archival value. These contents included environmental assessments and information on natural resource conservation.

**National Film Board.** In 1969, the National Film Board was issued a disposition authority for records associated with the production, promotion, and distribution of films, filmstrips, slides, and news clips. Officials at this institution told us that approximately 4,000 of its 13,000 films were sent to Library and Archives Canada before 1990 and the remainder resides with the National Film Board. Although the films are considered to have both business and archival value, the National Film Board maintains the custodianship to gain commercial benefit and to facilitate public access. Officials at the National Film Board told us that it makes approximately 3,500 films in its collection available through its website.

**Natural Resources Canada.** We noted that Natural Resources Canada was successful in having its disposition authorities updated in May 2013 and in negotiating one-year extensions for 18 of those authorities. In this instance, Library and Archives Canada accommodated institution-specific requirements.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.** Library and Archives Canada issued a disposition authority to this institution in March 2014. (See Exhibit 7.2 for more details.)

**7.15** Each institution is responsible for identifying its records of business value and for informing Library and Archives Canada of any changes that could affect the disposition authorities. Library and Archives Canada is responsible for identifying and acquiring records of archival value, which could include records of decisions, memoranda to Cabinet, presentation decks, and briefing materials. To ensure that all records of archival value are protected throughout their life cycle, including their timely transfer to Library and Archives Canada, each institution needs full coverage of its program activities.

**7.16** We also found that Library and Archives Canada does not have a program to monitor the adequacy of disposition authorities with institutions. In accordance with Library and Archives Canada's Directive on Disposition Authorizations, archivists at Library and Archives Canada are responsible for monitoring disposition authorities to ensure that they remain effective. This monitoring function is intended to provide assurance that coverage is adequate, and that the government's documentary heritage is transferred, when necessary, to the care and control of Library and Archives Canada. Library and Archives Canada officials informed us that disposition coverage of government documentary heritage was not complete and needed to be reassessed on an ongoing basis.

**7.17 Recommendation.** Library and Archives Canada should ensure that disposition authorities of the federal government's archival records are kept up to date. To accomplish this, it should develop a plan with achievable timelines for issuing and updating the necessary disposition authorities. It should also continue to engage with institutions and to monitor the adequacy of existing disposition authorities.

**The institution's response.** Agreed. Our current disposition plan is not meeting its objectives. In the fall of 2014, Library and Archives Canada will approve a focused and accelerated plan to ensure full disposition coverage for the Government of Canada institutions by the end of the 2017–18 fiscal year. This plan will be implemented by a dedicated task force that will ensure the following:

- updating disposition authorities against clear deadlines,
- continuing to engage Government of Canada institutions, and
- publishing a monitoring plan by December 2014.

### Library and Archives Canada has a backlog of 98,000 boxes of archival records

**7.18** We found that as of April 2014, Library and Archives Canada had approximately 98,000 boxes of the government's archival records, which included a variety of media it had received from institutions but had not yet integrated into its collection. This backlog of documentary heritage is composed of documents that Library and Archives Canada has not processed within its 60-day standard. Some of these boxes have been in the backlog for several decades. Library and Archives Canada confirmed that the backlog had grown over the years, and that it had no approved plan to eliminate the backlog.

**7.19** This finding is important because the contents of boxes in the backlog will remain unknown unless Library and Archives Canada receives a formal request for information that directs attention to specific boxes in the backlog. For the contents to become known, these boxes—which include textual records, maps, microfiches, digital records, and sound recordings—must be opened and searched manually, which is a time- and resource-consuming process. For example, Library and Archives Canada confirmed that the backlog of 98,000 boxes includes approximately 24,000 boxes of military records, some of them on microfilm and some dating back as far as 1890, as well as approximately

- 9,800 boxes from Transport Canada,
- 7,200 boxes from Industry Canada,
- 6,400 boxes from Public Works and Government Services Canada, and
- 5,200 boxes from the Department of Justice Canada.

**7.20** In its Policy on Making Holdings Discoverable, Library and Archives Canada states that records in its collection of documentary heritage become discoverable when information about their existence, description, location, and availability can be viewed. To provide this information, the federal institutions that are the originators of the records create **finding aids**.

**Finding aid**—Tool created by federal institutions to make archival records discoverable. Examples of finding aids include descriptive inventories, guides, and card catalogues. Federal institutions create finding aids before their records are transferred to Library and Archives Canada.

**7.21** Over the years, the finding aids have varied in quality, which has resulted in inefficiencies in locating records. For example, deficiencies in the quality of finding aids have made it difficult to locate records regarding the Indian residential school system and provide them to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (Exhibit 7.2). In 2013, Library and Archives Canada implemented new specifications for the transfer of archival records by institutions.

Among these specifications are mandatory detailed descriptions of the contents to be transferred.

**7.22** We also found that Library and Archives Canada has not defined a standard way of measuring what is in its backlog and has not estimated the average processing time for each media type of record. For example, the backlog inventory system does not distinguish between the various types of records a box may contain: paper files, maps, or multiple digital media—such as diskettes, CDs, DVDs, or USB keys. This lack of distinction is important because digital media can represent the equivalent of millions of pages of paper and can therefore significantly increase the amount of information to be processed. Because Library and Archives Canada does not know how much time is required to process the records, it cannot determine how many resources it needs to allocate toward eliminating the backlog.

**7.23** Library and Archives Canada officials informed us that \$600,000 was allocated in 2014 to process part of the backlog. However, this plan focused primarily on private collections and included only some government records. The plan and budget do not demonstrate how, when, and at what cost the backlog of government records will be eliminated.

#### **Exhibit 7.2 Finding aids for records of the Indian residential school system and legacy were deficient**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has a mandate to collect and preserve an archival record of the Indian residential school system and legacy. In addition, this record is to be preserved and made accessible to the public for future study and use.

As they began working, researchers at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada confirmed deficiencies in the quality of the finding aids, which had been created over many years by federal institutions. In the fall of 2013, the researchers conducted a pilot project to identify as many student health care records as possible. The pilot project demonstrated that 77 percent of the health care records had either nonexistent or incomplete finding aids. For this project, Library and Archives Canada and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada worked together to address the issue.

During our audit, the researchers confirmed that the level of description and completeness of the finding aids varied, and that the variations have resulted in inefficiencies. They also noted that some of the finding aids that Library and Archives Canada had previously added to the collection contained inaccuracies.

Challenges confronting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada included finding aids that

- listed boxes but did not describe box contents,
- described records that did not match the contents of physical boxes, or
- failed to identify all records in the boxes.

As an example, one of the researchers found an undescribed box to contain three years of reports that confirmed students' attendance in residential schools.

In the spring of 2014, Library and Archives Canada drafted a work plan to identify and correct the deficiencies of the finding aids.

**7.24 Recommendation.** Library and Archives Canada should develop and implement a plan that establishes the approach, resources, budget with cost and efficiency gains estimates, and timelines to eliminate the backlog of government documentary heritage. Results on progress should be measured and reported to management on a regular basis.

**The institution's response.** Agreed. In the fall of 2014, Library and Archives Canada will establish a dedicated task force and approve a plan to eliminate the Government of Canada's documentary heritage backlog by December 2015. Reports on results and progress will be provided on a quarterly basis to Library and Archives Canada's senior management.

### Digital readiness

**7.25** Library and Archives Canada states in its operational planning documents that it is progressively increasing the processing of digital content, and that digital records will represent the “format of choice” by 2017. Therefore, when federal institutions create records digitally, they must transfer the records to Library and Archives Canada in a digital format at the end of the records' retention periods. To prepare for this larger volume of digital information, Library and Archives Canada must articulate these plans in its vision, mission, and objectives. It must put in place strategies, policies, and procedures that will allow the transfer and preservation of digital information so that it is accessible to current and future generations.

**7.26** Electronic transfers from an institution's recordkeeping system to Library and Archives Canada's archival system contribute to more efficient and effective management of data. An electronic archival system, such as a **trusted digital repository**, could help Library and Archives Canada acquire, preserve, and facilitate access to its digital collection. Such a system could also help in ensuring the integrity, authenticity, and long-term accessibility of its digital collection.

**Trusted digital repository**—An electronic archival system for storing and preserving digital records. The term may also be used to describe a facility or institution that provides these services.

**7.27** We examined whether Library and Archives Canada had

- a corporate digital strategy in place to set forth a strategic vision and direction for fulfilling its mandate; and
- a system in place to manage the digital transfer, preservation, and provision of access to Canadians.

**7.28** Overall, we found that Library and Archives Canada did not have a corporate digital strategy for the preservation of digital data. In addition, despite having spent \$15.4 million on developing and implementing a trusted digital repository from 2006 to 2011, the entity

still did not have an integrated system to manage the electronic transfer, preservation, and storage of digital information, and provide digital access to its collection by Canadians.

### **Library and Archives Canada does not have a corporate digital strategy**

**7.29** We found that even though Library and Archives Canada has stated that digital records will represent its format of choice by 2017, it could not provide us with a strategy for managing either the transfers of digital archival records from institutions or the expected increase in digital information that it must preserve and make accessible.

**7.30** This finding is important because the amount of records in digital format (“digital born”) has grown significantly and currently doubles every two years, according to Library and Archives Canada. In its operational plan for the 2013–14 fiscal year, Library and Archives Canada stated that the acquisition of digital-born archival records remains a key goal. Archival standards exist for handling digital records so that their reliability, integrity, and usability are maintained.

**7.31** We found that Library and Archives Canada did not have a corporate digital strategy that expressed a vision for digital archiving and identified the strategic priorities, roles and responsibilities, and performance measures related to the long-term preservation of digital archives. In June 2014, after our audit work was completed, Library and Archives Canada’s guidance on the transfer of digital information was approved. However, we found that institution-specific direction on transfers was unclear. For example, two of the five institutions we consulted had general terms and conditions established for the manual transfer of digital records. We noted that their disposition authorities did not include such details as the necessary **metadata** or institution-specific format requirements for the transfer of digital records, which are important components to support recordkeeping practices and operations as institutions move toward more electronic processing.

**Metadata**—A set of data that includes descriptors of the content or data record with which it is associated. It can help in seamlessly transferring records to Library and Archives Canada by linking content to appropriate keywords and thereby facilitating searches and access to digital content, or to an institution’s requirements.

**7.32** We also noted that there was no analysis performed to determine whether Library and Archives Canada had the corporate capacity to manage the expected increase of digital transfers. Currently, the only methods of transferring digital records to Library and Archives Canada are the physical delivery of portable media, such as hard drives or disks, and the archiving of government information from the Internet. Library and Archives Canada has not determined the capacity required to accommodate future digital transfer demands because it has not been able to forecast the increases in digital transfers from institutions.



**7.33** Without a corporate digital strategy, Library and Archives Canada risks being unable to maintain the reliability and integrity of archival records in digital format, or to ensure their future accessibility. In January 2013, Library and Archives Canada put in place a three-year migration project to prevent the loss of digital government records collected since 1973. The project is intended to preserve the information in thousands of old media records by migrating them to a modern system. Examples include digital records acquired from the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, the Japanese Canadian Redress Commission, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

**7.34 Recommendation.** Library and Archives Canada should

- develop a corporate digital strategy to allow the transition to an integrated digital environment that ensures the sustainability of its digital collection; and
- continue to engage with institutions to prepare them on how to transfer digital records in an appropriate format, so that it can determine the capacity required to accommodate future digital transfers.

**The institution's response.** Agreed.

- By March 2015, Library and Archives Canada will have an approved digital strategy to firmly ground its acquisition, preservation, and access functions in the digital era. This digital strategy will build on Library and Archives Canada's business model, reflecting the institution's transition to an integrated digital environment.
- As part of its ongoing engagement with Government of Canada institutions, Library and Archives Canada issued new procedures in June 2014 for the transfer of digital documents.
- In September 2014, Library and Archives Canada approved guidelines on recommended file formats for transfer.
- Library and Archives Canada will continue to work with Government of Canada institutions and central agencies to forecast the growing volume of digital documents. This will be used to establish the capacity requirements for Library and Archives Canada.



### **Library and Archives Canada did not use its trusted digital repository**

**7.35** We found that from 2006 to 2011, Library and Archives Canada spent \$15.4 million to develop and implement a trusted digital repository, which was completed in 2011 but was never used. The institution still needs a system to receive records in a digital format. In 2014, it proposed the creation of a digital transformation program but at the time of the audit, the program was only in the early planning stages.

**7.36** This finding is important because to deliver on its objective of making digital the format of choice for record acquisitions by 2017, Library and Archives Canada must be ready to acquire increasing volumes of digital transfers when records in institutions reach the end of their retention periods.

**7.37** In 2006, Library and Archives Canada received approval to proceed with a project to improve existing systems and to build a trusted digital repository. We found that after Library and Archives Canada spent \$15.4 million over four years on the repository, it never used it, even though the system had been tested, approved, and deemed operational in July 2011. The trusted digital repository was shut down in November 2012 without documentation from management on the rationale for the decision. Officials at Library and Archives Canada explained to us that the institution had changed its approach from a custom-developed solution and was planning to implement a hybrid approach, which would include a commercially available solution. Library and Archives Canada informed us that most of the hardware and software from the previous, unused system—valued at approximately \$975,000—was repurposed for other projects and services.

**7.38** In the summer of 2013, senior management at Library and Archives Canada acknowledged that current processes were resulting in suboptimal preservation, and limited public discoverability and accessibility, of the institution's digital records. In 2014, Library and Archives Canada proposed the creation of a digital transformation program that would allow it to become an institution recognized as a "trusted digital repository."

**7.39 Recommendation.** To support the fulfillment of its mandate, Library and Archives Canada should implement a program that ensures the acquisition and sustainability of digital records, and the provision of access of its collection by Canadians.

**The institution's response.** Agreed. In April 2015, Library and Archives Canada will begin a comprehensive digital transformation program. This will improve its digital stewardship function and ensure it continues to acquire, preserve, and provide Canadians with access to their digital collection.

## Conclusion

**7.40** We concluded that Library and Archives Canada does not adequately fulfill its responsibilities for acquiring, preserving, and providing access to government documentary heritage, as it does not acquire all the records it should from federal institutions. At the time of the audit, only 30 of 195 institutions had renewed their disposition authorities since 2009.

**7.41** Library and Archives Canada's backlog contains approximately 98,000 boxes of archival records. Until the boxes are processed, Library and Archives Canada will not know what is in them, and only through formal requests for information that directs attention to specific boxes in the backlog can Canadians have access to their contents. We noted that at the time of the audit, Library and Archives Canada had no approved plan to eliminate the government records backlog.

**7.42** Library and Archives Canada has stated in policy and planning documents that it expects to receive an increasing amount of digital records in the coming years. Despite this, it has no corporate digital strategy or program in place to manage the anticipated increase of electronic transfers and storage of digital information.

## About the Audit

The Office of the Auditor General’s responsibility was to conduct an independent examination of Library and Archives Canada’s acquisition and preservation of the government’s documentary heritage, and its facilitation of access for Canadians of current and future generations, to provide objective information, advice, and assurance to assist Parliament in its scrutiny of the government’s management of resources and programs.

All of the audit work in this chapter was conducted in accordance with the standards for assurance engagements set out by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA) in the CPA Canada Handbook—Assurance. While the Office adopts these standards as the minimum requirement for our audits, we also draw upon the standards and practices of other disciplines.

As part of our regular audit process, we obtained management’s confirmation that the findings reported in this chapter are factually based.

### Objective

The audit objective was to determine whether Library and Archives Canada has fulfilled its responsibilities for acquiring and preserving government documentary heritage from federal institutions, and for facilitating access of these records for current and future generations.

### Scope and approach

During our audit of Library and Archives Canada, we consulted five institutions to understand the process and performance of Library and Archives Canada. The five institutions were Employment and Social Development Canada, Parks Canada, the National Film Board, Natural Resources Canada, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

They were selected on the basis of the maturity of their information management, their size and complexity, and their degree of interaction with Library and Archives Canada. We also looked at Treasury Board’s guidance and directives to government institutions.

Following their experiences allowed us to see first-hand how Library and Archives Canada responded to institutions’ requirements in fulfilling their obligations under the *Library and Archives of Canada Act*.

In our audit, we did not examine

- activities and responsibilities related to the *Access to Information Act*, the *Privacy Act*, or the *User Fees Act*; or
- any issue or subject other than the federal government’s documentary heritage.

## Criteria

Criteria	Sources
<b>To determine whether Library and Archives Canada has fulfilled its responsibilities for acquiring and preserving government documentary heritage from federal institutions, and for facilitating access of these records for current and future generations, we used the following criteria:</b>	
Library and Archives Canada has adequate systems, processes, and controls to evaluate and acquire documentary heritage from government institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Library and Archives of Canada Act</i></li> <li>• Policy on Information Management, Treasury Board</li> <li>• Evaluation and Acquisition Policy Suite, Library and Archives Canada</li> <li>• Policy Management Framework, Library and Archives Canada, February 2013</li> </ul>
Library and Archives Canada has adequate plans and processes to preserve government documentary heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Library and Archives of Canada Act</i></li> <li>• Policy on Information Management, Treasury Board</li> <li>• Stewardship Policy Framework, Library and Archives Canada</li> <li>• Policy Management Framework, Library and Archives Canada, February 2013</li> </ul>
Library and Archives Canada has adequate plans and processes to facilitate access to government documentary heritage for current and future generations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Library and Archives of Canada Act</i></li> <li>• Policy on Information Management, Treasury Board</li> <li>• Access Policy Framework, Library and Archives Canada, 2011</li> <li>• Policy on Making Holdings Available, Library and Archives Canada, April 2013</li> <li>• Policy on Making Holdings Discoverable, Library and Archives Canada, December 2013</li> <li>• Policy Management Framework, Library and Archives Canada, February 2013</li> </ul>

Management reviewed and accepted the suitability of the criteria used in the audit.

## Period covered by the audit

The audit covered the period between the 2009–10 and 2014–15 fiscal years. Audit work for this chapter was completed on 30 April 2014.

## Audit team

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## Appendix List of recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations found in Chapter 7. The number in front of the recommendation indicates the paragraph where it appears in the chapter. The numbers in parentheses indicate the paragraphs where the topic is discussed.

Recommendation	Response
<b>Acquisition, preservation, and access</b>	
<b>7.17</b> Library and Archives Canada should ensure that disposition authorities of the federal government's archival records are kept up to date. To accomplish this, it should develop a plan with achievable timelines for issuing and updating the necessary disposition authorities. It should also continue to engage with institutions and to monitor the adequacy of existing disposition authorities. (7.12–7.16)	Agreed. Our current disposition plan is not meeting its objectives. In the fall of 2014, Library and Archives Canada will approve a focused and accelerated plan to ensure full disposition coverage for the Government of Canada institutions by the end of the 2017–18 fiscal year. This plan will be implemented by a dedicated task force that will ensure the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• updating disposition authorities against clear deadlines,</li> <li>• continuing to engage Government of Canada institutions, and</li> <li>• publishing a monitoring plan by December 2014.</li> </ul>
<b>7.24</b> Library and Archives Canada should develop and implement a plan that establishes the approach, resources, budget with cost and efficiency gains estimates, and timelines to eliminate the backlog of government documentary heritage. Results on progress should be measured and reported to management on a regular basis. (7.18–7.23)	Agreed. In the fall of 2014, Library and Archives Canada will establish a dedicated task force and approve a plan to eliminate the Government of Canada's documentary heritage backlog by December 2015. Reports on results and progress will be provided on a quarterly basis to Library and Archives Canada's senior management.

Recommendation	Response
<p><b>Digital readiness</b></p> <p><b>7.34</b> Library and Archives Canada should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop a corporate digital strategy to allow the transition to an integrated digital environment that ensures the sustainability of its digital collection and</li> <li>• continue to engage with institutions to prepare them on how to transfer digital records in an appropriate format, so that it can determine the capacity required to accommodate future digital transfers. (7.29–7.33)</li> </ul> <p><b>7.39</b> To support the fulfillment of its mandate, Library and Archives Canada should implement a program that ensures the acquisition and sustainability of digital records, and the provision of access of its collection by Canadians. (7.35–7.38)</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By March 2015, Library and Archives Canada will have an approved digital strategy to firmly ground its acquisition, preservation, and access functions in the digital era. This digital strategy will build on Library and Archives Canada’s business model, reflecting the institution’s transition to an integrated digital environment.</li> <li>• As part of its ongoing engagement with Government of Canada institutions, Library and Archives Canada issued new procedures in June 2014 for the transfer of digital documents.</li> <li>• In September 2014, Library and Archives Canada approved guidelines on recommended file formats for transfer.</li> <li>• Library and Archives Canada will continue to work with Government of Canada institutions and central agencies to forecast the growing volume of digital documents. This will be used to establish the capacity requirements for Library and Archives Canada.</li> </ul> <p>Agreed. In April 2015, Library and Archives Canada will begin a comprehensive digital transformation program. This will improve its digital stewardship function and ensure it continues to acquire, preserve, and provide Canadians with access to their digital collection.</p>



